

also the non-agent organizations such as the Treasury Employees Association. There is also in place the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA), the lobbying group for federal law enforcement.

Most states, if not all, have law enforcement lobbying groups. New York City has the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association.

All these are effective groups and can readily be mobilized. And of course active duty enforcement personnel can write and contact their elected officials in support of the rule of law and law enforcement agencies.

What is needed is a small organization to disseminate to each of these groups the information and program to counter NRA's Big Lie rhetoric and program. I stress that the group would not be an umbrella organization. Its purpose would be to galvanize opposition to NRA's extreme positions and to counter NRA's lies and misleading statements.

The name of such a group could be the "Law Enforcement Information Association." Its staff would be small. It could probably do the job with about ten staff members.

The organizations mentioned and their individual members can be mobilized to contact their congressmen/women and senators and state and local elected officials by telephone and in writing and to meet with them and convey one simple message:

"Support the rule of law and the law enforcement agencies responsible for carrying out the laws of the land and reject NRA extremism."

It can be done. It should be done.

Thank you.

CONGRESS CAN DO BETTER IN 1996

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, this is a new year and a new year of the 104th session, a brand-new opportunity for those of us in the House to begin to look backward and reflect and look forward hopefully to do a better job.

One has been told that the month of January is represented by the mystical god that has two heads; one that looks backwards and one that looks forward. You and I know if we look backward too long we live in the past and no progress is made.

If we look back at 1995, we see Democrats and Republicans yelling at each other. We see people who are willing to take their views to the extreme at the expense of America, yet they say they do it in the name of saving America. If we look back, we see people saying we made commitments to the American people that we would do these things.

Hopefully, Mr. Speaker, we do not look back too long. If we look back long enough, we know that what we did in 1995 was not always honorable; was not always those actions that are worthy of those who represent the people and who say that we represent "We the people."

Hopefully, we look back just long enough to say we will try to do better and try to be more responsible. And I ask, Mr. Speaker, is it responsible as we look at 1996, and this is the third day, is it responsible to families and

communities to know what we are doing in this shutdown? Is it responsible for those who would have home loans to find that they are unable to execute those loans because they cannot get anyone to provide the insurance? Is that responsible?

Is it responsible, Mr. Speaker, to deny the students and their parents the opportunity for student loans when they did not cause this impasse? So why are we making them hostage to this?

Is it fair to the taxpayers to deny them their services, which they no longer have that opportunity, not only to consider, Mr. Speaker, the more than 280,000 workers who are now being shut out of the opportunity of providing services that we say we are going to pay them later. Is that fiscally responsible? It certainly is not civilly responsible and it is not humanly responsible. We are not being responsible as human beings, much less as leaders of this great body of this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, in 1996 we can do better than that. We certainly can honor our veterans, Mr. Speaker, our veterans who have served this country well. I am told as we call our veterans hospitals, particularly ones in Salisbury, that people are threatened to lose their jobs. Nurses are not being paid fully for the work that they are doing. Some of the people are not able to work at all and those who are working are not being paid fully. And so what? Veterans are being denied even the health care that they should have.

This is unfair, Mr. Speaker. Further, when we call our regional office in Winston-Salem that provides the claims, there is no one to answer the telephone. Only a skeletal crew. So if a veteran wants to process a new application, wants to find out what the status of his claim, there is no one, not even to answer the telephone. Is that being responsible?

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity in 1996 to go forward with honor. And we also have an opportunity in 1996 to look at reflectively our action, our activities, our commitment and our involvement in serving the people in this body and to act if we have been responsible. I submit, Mr. Speaker, we have not.

Finally, I called my State EPA or environmental secretary just to find out what are the implications for health and water and safety and what would be North Carolina's vulnerability as the shutdown proceeds. I was told there are 287 Federal workers who receive some Federal funds who are providing water and air protection. In fact, 135 of them are paid in part or fully by EPA.

Through the execution of a letter, they were able to forestall the sending home of 135 employees who had responsibilities for inspection of the air, the water in our rivers; 135 people could have possibly been sent home today if they could not have gotten that extension, and they do not know how long that will last. They are sorry they were

not able to get 125 of the coastal management because they are part of the Commerce budget.

Then there are eight persons in marine fisheries and, in talking about the safety of marine fisheries, those persons will be denied an opportunity to provide that the waters are safe for the fish that people have to eat.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I think that 1996 is an opportunity where we can make a lot of resolutions, but we ought to resolve ourselves that we will be both fiscally responsible, humanly responsible, but we also will be legally responsible in providing for the welfare of this government, for the people deserve no less.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. CAMPBELL] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. CAMPBELL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GOSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. DAVIS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. GEJDENSON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GEJDENSON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

VICTIMS OF GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. EDWARDS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, hostage-taking should have no place in a democracy. There is nothing wrong with this Congress or any Congress having an open, honest debate about a budget plan. If this year's budget debate takes 2 more days, 2 more weeks, or even 2 more months, there is nothing wrong with that. Open democracy and debate is what this institution is all about.

But it is terribly wrong, and it is totally wrong, for Speaker GINGRICH and Gingrich Republicans of this House to

use Federal employees and their families as hostages during this budget debate. To harm innocent families is morally wrong. Even Ebenezer Scrooge showed some compassion at Christmas-time, but Christmas has come and gone. Yet speaker GINGRICH and his band of extremists in this House have continued to furlough hundreds of thousands of Federal employees. No telling how many Tiny Tims across America have been harmed as innocent victims in this play.

Tonight let the American people be very clear about facts. Fact No. 1: Yesterday Senator DOLE in the other body voted unanimously to pass a resolution to put Federal workers back to work immediately. As Mr. DOLE said, and I quote, "Enough is enough."

Fact No. 2: If this House would simply take the Dole resolution, passed unanimously in the Senate, and pass it in the House, it would take 15 minutes to do so. After that 15-minute vote, the President would sign it, and within hours hundreds of thousands of Federal employees would be back to work and be earning a paycheck and servicing our Nation's senior citizens and veterans and students who need loans in order to better themselves.

Fact No. 3, and this is a sad fact but a true one: Today in this House Speaker GINGRICH and a band of his supporters chose not to even let this House have a vote on the Dole resolution to put the Federal Government back into operation and to put Federal workers back to work.

Speaker GINGRICH basically denied the democratic process today. In doing so, he harmed hundreds of thousands of Federal employees and the many millions of people that they serve, including our Nation's veterans who put their lives on the line for this Nation.

There has been a lot of talk about statistics during this budget debate. In the next few moments, I just simply want to put a human face on the victims of the Gingrich plan to shut down the Federal Government.

One letter from my district said this. I had a phone call today from a woman veteran who is being set up for a bone marrow transplant for breast cancer. She wondered if she would soon hear about her VA claim. I tried to explain to her about the furloughs at the regional office.

Another letter from my district:

Dear Congressman Edwards:

I am a medical administration specialist at the Waco VA medical center. I'm also a single parent with a teenager at home and a child in college. I just received a \$78 paycheck. I've had to borrow money from my mother to pay my rent. I don't know how I'm going to pay my daughter's college tuition payment that is due now.

She goes on to say,

It is obvious to me that the honorable Speaker and his staff have lost sight of the human face of their actions. We're not faceless. We are someone's wife, husband, brother, sister, son, daughter. When we are held hostage by the whims of Washington legislators, our hardship radiates out into the community.

Another letter from a Government employee in my district:

Dear Congressman Chet Edwards:

I am a government employee with the Veterans Administration. This government shutdown has caused me great hardship. I am unable to purchase my insulin medication for diabetes.

Let me repeat that, my colleagues:

I am unable to purchase my insulin medication for diabetes. I have had to borrow money for food and medicine. My rent has to be paid by the first of the month. My landlord, who ironically is owned by the government, is the housing authority, and they are going to charge me \$25 for the first day and \$5 every extra day that I do not have money to pay my rent.

Mr. Speaker, that is the face of the victims of this needless, absolutely unproductive Federal shutdown, and there are many more faces throughout the country. In the days ahead I have every intention of letting this House know of the victims from these games that are being played.

GETTING OUR FINANCIAL HOUSE IN ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. SHAYS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I was elected to the statehouse in 1974 and began service in 1975 and I could never understand how Congress would be able to spend more than it raised in revenues and deficit-spend. I knew that on the State level we had to balance our State budgets.

I vowed when I was elected in 1987 that my first priority would be to get our financial house in order and be part of that effort. There was a small group of us, only 30 at the time, who voted for a budget that the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. KASICH] introduced which began to do that, and each year we saw that number increase. Finally this year we saw a Congress that over 300 Members voted for a balanced budget amendment.

But it would be kind of silly to vote for a balanced budget amendment and not be willing to vote to balance the budget, and we set out to balance the budget. It was a long and an arduous task in which we spent the last 11 months to in fact balance the budget in 7 years. We submitted that budget and it was vetoed by the President.

We are asking the President of the United States to do the same kind of heavy lifting that we have done and tell us where his priorities are and where he would spend and where he would cut. I do not disagree that the President might have a problem with where we spend on Medicare, Medicaid, school lunch, student loans. He may have differences. He may not agree with the tax cuts that we have suggested in the next 7 years, all of those are issues that are open for dialog and debate and need to be debated.

The issue is, when? When is he going to submit his balanced budget, a budg-

et balanced in 7 years, scored by real numbers of the Congressional Budget Office, which is not a partisan office, it is not a bipartisan office, it is a non-partisan office.

And so we are now in a position where the President has, which is his privilege, the ability to take the 13 different budget items and agree to the ones that we have passed, and the 13 budget items, any of those that he does not agree with, he can veto. He has vetoed the Interior bill, the Commerce, Justice and State and the VA-HUD bill.

My colleague was right in pointing out that the Veterans Administration is not functioning. It is not functioning because we provided a budget and the President decided to veto it. We have not yet presented him the Labor-HHS bill. That is in the Senate and is now filibustered by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who are in the Senate. We have not given him the District of Columbia bill and the Foreign Operations. But all the other bills we have given him.

So we have a shutdown. I contend that this is not an issue of Federal employees or even the reduction and disruption of some services. It is an issue of whether finally after 30 years of deficit spending we are going to get our financial house in order.

When I was first elected to the statehouse, our debt was \$350 billion. Our debt has grown now to \$4.9 trillion. It is about whether we finally, after so many years, are going to get our financial house in order and balance the Federal budget and in the process save our trust funds, particularly Medicare, from insolvency starting this year and bankruptcy in the seventh year.

We have heard criticism of our budget, that the earned income tax credit, a credit that goes to people who pay no taxes, is being cut and yet we know it is going from \$19.9 billion to \$25 billion in the next 7 years, the school lunch program, which under our plan goes from \$5.1 billion to \$6.1 billion, or our student loan which goes from \$24 billion to \$36 billion. Only in this place when you spend 50 percent more like on the student loan program, going from \$24 billion to \$36 billion, do people call it a cut. Or Medicaid that is going from \$89 billion to \$127 billion. Or Medicare which is going from \$178 billion to \$289 billion.

We have put in tremendous new money under our Medicare program. For instance, it goes from \$4,800 to \$7,100 per beneficiary in the 7th year, a significant increase. Ultimately we have a disagreement with the President on Medicare and Medicaid. He may have other priorities. The simple fact is this Government would get started in 6 hours, those parts that need to be funded that are not would be funded in easily 6 hours if the President did one thing that he promised to do at Thanksgiving, and I thought when the President gave his word, he meant to keep it, and he gave his word